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Throssel Hole Priory is a training monastery, parish church and retreat centre following the Sōtō Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey, whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess. Shasta Abbey, Headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church, is located in Mt. Shasta, California, U.S.A. The Priors of Throssel Hole Priory are disciples of Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett and follow her teaching.

Throssel Hole Priory and Journal

The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory is published as a service to people who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal the Priory's members and friends share their understanding and meditation experience. We invite our readers to submit material arising from the practice of meditation to be considered for publication. Opinions expressed in each article are those of its author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Priors. The Journal is published bi-monthly (or if less frequently with an equivalently greater number of pages).

PRIORS: Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke, O.B.C.
Rev. Teigan Stevens, O.B.C.

TRUSTEES: Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess
Rev. Rōshi Jishō Perry, O.B.C.
Rev. Teacher Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.

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Address Correspondence To:

The Priors,
Throssel Hole Priory,
Carrshield, Nr. Hexham.
Northumberland, NE47 8AL
(Telephone *Whitfield* (049 85) 204

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THE REAL YOU

Rev. Teigan Stevens, O.B.C.

A correspondent wrote recently to say among other things that he thought children could teach adults a lot if we could get over the idea that we are so important; he went on to say that perhaps the Buddha Nature is easier to see in children. And it is true that there is a spontaneity, a naivete, a trustfulness in most children that is naturally appealing to older people. During the growing up period for most of us, we have been taught to cover up our original simplicity, to develop a hardness that we believe protects us from threatening outsiders.

Meditation allows us to remove this shell and to find our original purity; in fact, it is the expression of this purity. Rev. Zenji describes the simplicity of several of the priests in Sojiji as follows: "On my return, round eight-thirty, I found the trainee downstairs still asleep and became really angry. (Rev. Zenji's footnote: un-Buddhist behaviour and speech.) I went to the kitchen to collect my breakfast and to my amazement, there was one of the old priests, who had been to morning service, quietly down on his hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. He was not complaining that most of the Juniors were still in bed but simply getting on with his work, doing what had to be done. My anger just disappeared, there was something about the quiet old man that made all the nonsense in this house this summer seem very unimportant. After seeing him I went back and cleaned the upstairs of the house I was living in. Later I went to weed Zenji Sama's garden and, on the way back, found Rev. Akira quietly washing the long corridor by himself. The simple actions of these old men sparkle like stars in a dark sky". ¹

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1. The Wild White Goose, Vol. I, by Rev. Roshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C. Abbess; Shasta Abbey, 1977 P.60

One of the major efforts in Zen training is to give up the judgmental mind, the attachment to opinions about ourselves, other people and the way the world should be, because these make up the shell that conceal the Real You. We carry on this effort through meditation, both in sitting and in action, where we allow all kinds of thoughts, (memories, emotions, ideas, perceptions, etc.) to come into consciousness and to allow them to go of their own accord, without being concerned by them. We work on ourselves by keeping the Precepts because each one is a warning to us about where we are likely to add to our shell. For instance, we usually get angry at other people when they behave in such a way as to show us a piece of ourselves that we feel we have to hold on to, or we covet something that we feel we absolutely must have in order to survive. If we would stay very still when anger or greed appear, we might find out how to peel away a piece of the shell. We also work on ourselves through cultivating certain attitudes; one of these is humility. At a Zen monastery, everyone is asked to respond immediately to requests from those senior to him so as to give up the willfulness that holds together the shell. Everyone is asked to make gasshō to people and tools in order to continually bring us back to the mind of respect. This is called "beginner's mind".

It is possible to cultivate "beginner's mind" as a lay person, too, though courage, skill and persistence are needed. If one continually tries to do whatever needs to be done, eagerly and to the best of one's ability; if one mentally makes gasshō when with other people; if one treats tools with care and gentleness, one is expressing humility. The scriptures then begin to open to us. "O Shariputra, form is only pure; pure is all form; there is then nothing more than this; for what is form is pure and

what is pure is form".² "Without obedience there is no filial piety; and if there is no service, no advice. Such action and most unpretentious work all foolish seem and dull. But those who practice thus this law continually shall in all worlds be called Lord of Lords unto eternity".³

2. The Scripture of Great Wisdom, Zen is Eternal Life by Roshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C. Abbess; Dharma Publishing, 1976, p. 277

3. The Most Excellent Mirror-Samadhi, *ibid.* p.283

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JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RENEWALS

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Hossen

Rev. Meian Elbert, Priest-Trainee

The Hossen ceremony is the testing of the Chief Junior's understanding by the other monks. It takes place at some time during the Chief Junior's term, generally towards the end. It is a very beautiful ceremony: the drum is beaten in a quickening rhythm as the Abbess's procession approaches, and mounts to a climax as the Abbess enters the hall followed by her assistants, the Chief Junior, and the Benji (Chief Junior's assistant). After the Scripture of Great Wisdom the Chief Junior recites the verse he has chosen from the scriptures. There is some fairly complicated ceremonial as the Chief Junior makes bows to the Abbess and chief officers of the temple and is given the ceremonial bamboo sword. The mondo then starts: the Benji asks a question relating to the Chief Junior's verse and the Chief Junior answers it. If the Benji is satisfied with the answer, he says "Congratulations" and the Chief Junior replies "I thank you" and strikes the wooden block with the sword. Each monk in turn then asks a question, starting with the most junior and working upwards. If a monk is not satisfied with the answer he receives he can ask for clarification. Some of the questions are asked primarily in order to test the Chief Junior's understanding, others are asked mainly because the questioner wishes to learn something. In fact, all questions serve both purposes. There is no separation between the questioner and the person who answers, no judgement or criticism; everyone wants the Chief Junior to succeed, and the questions are the means to this end. After the mondo is over the Chief Junior recites a poem of his invention, gives back the bamboo sword to the Abbess and makes more bows to her and the chief officers. The senior officers then all recite their poems in turn, starting with the most junior and ending with the Abbess. At the end of the ceremony the drum is beaten again as the Abbess's procession leaves the hall.

The first time I attended a Hossen ceremony I was deeply impressed and filled with admiration for the Chief Junior, knowing that I could never do anything like that myself. Then it dawned on me that one day I would have to do something like that myself, since every monk does the ceremonies of the Chief Junior, and I was scared stiff. From then on, for the two years and four months until my own Hossen ceremony, every time I thought about it (which wasn't all that often) my soul quaked within me. I just hoped and prayed that by the time my Hossen came I would have learned something about Buddhism, or at least be able to meditate, so that I would not make a complete fool of myself. In the event we had the ceremony about two months before I expected it, at about two days' notice. I was so busy at the time that I didn't really have time to panic, but I was aware that I was completely unprepared, still knew nothing about Buddhism and still hadn't learned to meditate. The evening before the ceremony I sat in the meditation hall, all ready to panic, but instead I suddenly knew that I could do this ceremony, that I could meditate when I had to, and that although I didn't know anything about Buddhism it didn't matter because the Buddhas and Patriarchs would help me.

At the ceremony itself I found out something even more interesting: the ceremony took place, I made the bows and took the bamboo sword, recited my verse and answered the questions - but it had nothing to do with "me" at all, except insofar as I was willing to be there and let it happen. The answers I gave were not startling and magnificent (at least one was "I don't know"), but they were true - true for me at that moment. There was no way that I could speak anything other than the simple truth. It did not matter whether or not I exhibited a deep understanding of Zen; it did not matter that I made a few mistakes in the ceremonial. All that mattered was that I should have complete faith in the Buddhas and Patriarchs and in That which answered the questions through me, and that I speak the truth without caring whether I was a fool or not. After the ceremony

several people said they had found the questions and answers very helpful - as in fact they always are at Hossen, because the same thing seems to happen to every Chief Junior, very simply and naturally.

This I think must be the real object of the Hossen ceremony: you find out that there is something other than your little self that works through you, and that you can be willing for it to do so or you can impede it. During the Hossen ceremony you have to be completely willing because it is the only way you can do the ceremony; at other times it is not always so clear and it seems that one's self is constantly in the way. But to have seen once that we can just "forget the selfish self for a little" and allow the Lord to work through us - and that everyone, even we, can do this - is enormously encouraging when it seems that the Mount Sumeru of self is overwhelming and that our training is puny and useless in the face of it. We know we can do it when we have to; now we have to learn to do it all the time.

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SESSHIN

We will be holding a sesshin, an intensive meditation retreat, from the 3rd - 7th of April. Sesshin is a Japanese word meaning "to search the heart". Anyone who has been to Throssel Hole Priory or one of its outside retreats within the year 1979-80 is welcome to attend this retreat.

All that is necessary is a willingness to do something about oneself. This is an excellent opportunity to deepen your commitment to meditation and training.

We look forward to seeing you.

Fears

Rev. Saidō Kennaway, Priest-Trainee

One must live with the roots of karma cut away. To do this we must indeed know the house-builder of this house of ego, know all his tools, know all his building materials; there is no other way that we can know immaculacy.¹

At the Abbey one of the uses of the recollection period in the evening is a way to find out the materials of the house-builder of ego. It's a time to look at the day and see how we've kept the Precepts, what we've learnt from the day's training. It's useful to keep a notebook and record anything that's useful and look back from time to time and see if any patterns emerge. I would like to share some reactions or attitudes I've found in myself which have become more noticeable through the use of these periods:-

* Another person tells one to do something that one is just about to do or is thinking about doing. This produces a feeling of inadequacy that is expressed in frustration and/or anger.

* One makes a mistake and tries to cover it up as quickly as possible so that no-one sees one's capable of doing such a thing.

* Wanting to do things on one's own - I used to know a blues song that went something like:

All by myself, all by myself,

Don't need anyone to help me,

I can do it all by myself.

It's refusing help from others and insisting on

¹ "Kyojūkaimon" Commentary, Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Shasta Abbey, 1977, p. 3.

finishing something yourself. An offer of help produces a feeling of being incapable, so a genuine offer is seen as a threat to one's adequacy.

* Not being prepared to say anything in case people think you're a fool who doesn't know. As an example I remember the first time I went to Throssel a monk asked if anyone had any questions. There was a horrible tense silence and I was dying to ask "What is the Buddha?" but assumed that everyone else must know the answer to such a basic question and would be bored by hearing the answer that must have been given many times already! Similarly not being prepared to come out with what you really think, as someone else may disagree, get upset etc.

* Not being able to totally commit oneself without a way out.

* Trying to show you're the one that does the most - I have felt almost a kind of panic at not being able to find something to do when everyone is busily working during, say, a clean-up period.

* Competition - trying to devalue other people's efforts so that one can appear better. There's a kind of fear of others' success and pleasure at their failure.

When one looks over these reactions, noted over a period of time, one can see that they are really fear in a variety of aspects, fear that maybe one isn't competent, that one can't do everything perfectly, know everything, handle all situations. Fear of inadequacy, failure, insecurity, fear of the unknown.

It's interesting that once you can see something clearly for what it is, it loses a lot of its seeming hold on you. This is particularly true of fear as it's very obviously a creation of one's own mind - a huge fog we produce. The way to deal with fear is

to face it head on. Sit still in meditation and really look. All you see is something very small - an ego that's been pricked or a responsibility you're avoiding that has to be taken, and once you take the first step it's easy. It's like fog evaporating as the sun starts to shine on it.

This is what having compassion for oneself means - seeing that we are human and not perfect, that there's nothing intrinsically wrong with what we are but at the same time knowing that we do have the ability to change. In this case one can choose to live free of fear by meditating and heeding the still small voice rather than the selfish one.

It seems that the education and social system is likely to get people stuck in fear in some form or other. I've written this in the hope that someone doesn't spend as much time as I have getting bogged down in analysing it all. What we all want to do deep down inside is find the Lord of the House so see through fear quickly and go on! It's why the scripture says

"Om to the One who leaps beyond all fear!"¹

¹ "Zen Is Eternal Life", Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Dharma Publishing, 1976, p. 292: Vespers, "The Litany of the Great Compassionate One".

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ZEN*

The Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kōhō Zenji

In grateful remembrance of our Founder, the Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kōhō Zenji, we are reprinting excerpts from a chapter of his book entitled Soto Zen. Kōhō Zenji, who Transmitted the Truth to our Master, the Reverend Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, was the late Chief Abbot of Sōjiji and Archbishop of the Kanto Plains.

Zen, like Buddhism itself, is a product of India. However, its antiquity is far greater than that of Buddhism. Its origin is connected with the custom of Indian philosophers who sought an escape from the heat by dwelling in forests. Here they spent their time in meditation and observance of religious ceremonies. This practice of sitting in a prescribed posture beneath a large tree to meditate was regarded as a pleasant religious exercise. This ultimately developed into Zazen, the form of meditation practiced in the Zen Sect. Zen is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word Chan which in turn is a phonetic transcription of Prakrit jhana, suffering the loss of its final vowel. The Sanskrit equivalent of jhana is dhyana which means "to think". The Upanishads, which deal with Brahman philosophy, may be considered a product of this type of meditation in forests. The number of Upanishads is very great. The first occurrence of the word Zen is in the Chandogya Upanishad which is one of the oldest of the Upanishads. In early Sanskrit translations into Chinese the word was rendered "thought and practice". In the later translations the term "quiet reflection" was chosen. The former meant concentrating the mind on one object, thinking about it thoroughly and then carrying

*Reprinted from the *Journal of Shasta Abbey* Sept.-Oct. 1979, by permission.

it out into practice. The latter term had reference to the practice of putting one's heart at rest in order to see things more sharply. Zen has also been translated by the word jo, i.e. fixed, stable, This has reference to the fixing of one's mind on one object in order to free it from distractions. The form of Zen (dhyana) which flourished before the rise of Buddhism lacked completeness in both method and form. Buddhism gave new meaning to Zen, deepened its contents, and defined its objectives clearly. We might also say that Zen strengthened the foundations of Buddhism as a religion. It is with this in mind that Oldenberg said, "Zen (meditation) is to Buddhism what prayer is to other religions." Hermann Beckh wrote, "The only way to understand correctly the difference between Buddhism and other religions is by a comparison between Zen meditation in Buddhism and prayer in other religions." Buddhism owes its success as a great world religion to the fact that Zen meditation forms its practical basis. Indeed the Enlightenment of the Buddha was realized through the practice of Zen meditation. There is nothing unnatural then in the fact that Buddhism has its roots in Zen. Although the form of Zazen practiced by the Buddha was the same as the earlier non-Buddhist Zen, its contents were quite different in that the Zen meditation of the Buddha was based on the premise of the identity between body and mind and did not recognize the existence of an eternal soul. It was an indispensable religious exercise aimed at realizing the perfection of human character in this life. Zen has always served as the foundation for the many virtues esteemed by later generations. Kuei-feng Tsung-mi (Japanese Keiho Sumitsu), a learned priest of the T'ang Dynasty, in the preface to his Explanations as to the Origins of Zen, distinguishes five kinds of Zen: firstly, Non-Buddhist Zen (Gedo Zen); secondly, Popular Zen (Bambu Zen); thirdly, Hinayana Zen (Shojo Zen); fourthly, Mahayana Zen (Daijo Zen); fifthly, Zen of the Highest Vehicle (Saijojo Zen). Non-Buddhist Zen has as its object rebirth in heaven rejecting

this world. It is found in the Yoga School, one of the six schools of Indian philosophy, and was also the type of Zen practiced by Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, two teachers under whom Siddhattha studied after becoming a monk. They considered Zen meditation itself as their final goal, hoping to be born after death in one of the heavens corresponding to the stage of Zen meditation they had reached during their life. They regarded the mind and the body as two separate entities, believed in the existence of an eternal soul, and sought supernatural powers. Popular Zen may be considered an amateurish kind of Zen practised by people who accept Buddhism and, despising the afflictions of this world, try to realize the joy of liberation. Since these people aim at escaping from the world of illusion to find happiness, they have not gotten beyond the stage of selection. Accordingly it is difficult for them to enjoy truly peaceful Zen meditation.

Hinayana Zen is the Zen practised by people who have arrived at the stage of selflessness transcending all expressions of selection and rejection. However, although its followers have subjectively realized the non-existence of the soul in man, they have not yet come to understand that matter too is devoid of a permanent fixed unchanging existence. Therefore we may consider this kind of Zen meditation one-sided. Hinayana Zen utilizes very complex categories. It has enriched later generations by its concept of Zen meditation. Mahayana Zen is that form of Zen which has achieved an understanding of the truth arising from the denial of both the soul in man and the permanency of things. The negation, or ku as it is called in Japanese, denies the validity of all concepts which hold that things have a fixed existence. Through ku we can see the real nature of things. The scriptures of Mahayana are nothing but an attempt to reveal the contents of the Buddha's Great Experience through writing. If

we wish to grasp the basic spirit of Buddhism and to live according to that spirit, the only path for us to follow is that of Zen. The fact that the Mahayana scriptures were preached by the Buddha either on the occasion of his entering Zen meditation or after he emerged from meditation must always be kept in mindThe Zen meditation practiced by the Bodhisattvas in China before the establishment of the Zen Sect as well as the Zen meditation of the Sanron Sect, Tendai Sect, Kegon Sect etc. are included under this heading of Mahayana Zen.

The Zen of the Highest Vehicle is the Zen transmitted by Daruma Daishi (Bodhidharma) and teaches that man's nature is originally pure and untainted, that he possesses inherent wisdom from the time of his birth, and that his heart is Buddhahood itself. ... Daruma's teachings are collectively known as "the Two Entrances and Four Deeds". "The Two Entrances" are: 1) the entrance into Buddhism through reason, and 2) the entrance into Buddhism through deeds. Entrance through reason is the term applied to the realization that we have the same heart as that of the Buddha. We may attain this knowledge through the guidance of a good teacher. The entrance into Buddhism through deeds is the name applied to the realization in practice that all beings have the Buddha-heart. This realization is nothing other than what we experience in Zazen and in our daily life. The essence of Daruma Zen is the Enlightenment and practice which arises from the knowledge of the existence of the Buddha-heart. The Buddha-heart is revealed in the wisdom of Enlightenment and the practice of Zazen (Later) Zen was transformed into a Chinese religion. When many people lived together, it was not possible for them to devote themselves entirely to Zazen and other religious matters. In order to live they had to pay due regard to daily chores such as sweeping, cooking, farming, etc. In order for such work to assume the

same degree of importance as was attached to Zazen, it became necessary to grasp thoroughly the meaning of Buddha-nature and Buddha-heart. Thus Zen was gradually deepened spiritually and made to meet the needs of ordinary living. Zen henceforth was not to be relegated to the meditation hall of a temple, but would come forth to play an active part in all aspects of society. Zen teaches that we should not be dominated by the Scriptures but rather we should use them for our own needs; that we should not adhere to a literal interpretation of scriptures, but apply their teachings to our daily living. Zen thus made regulations to cover collective living as found in the large monasteries and thereby sought to supplement the lack of Mahayana commandments concerning religious observances and etiquette

Zen theoretically holds to the doctrine that one's own heart is Buddha and that the path to Enlightenment is to be found in one's own heart. However, owing to the individuality and differing personalities of various Zen masters, it is only natural that their methods of teaching should differ vastly, thus inevitably giving rise to many schools. ...In summary, Lin-chi is characterized by a sternness of spirit and complete freedom, Wei-Yang by a sudden identity of minds between master and disciple engaged in a serious exchange of questions and answers. Ts'ao-tung (Japanese, Soto) by an absolute unity between practice and knowledge and a strict observance of religious ritual, Yun-men by the use of unique phrases to get rid of delusions, and the Fa-yen by a practical use of the sayings of the masters to dispel immediately all the illusions which disturb the Zen followerThe quiet, meditative Zen of Hung-chih teaches that meditation and wisdom are inseparable and that practice and Enlightenment are identical. But one misstep and Zen becomes as lifeless as a withered tree and falls into naturalism. The Sung Dynasty was marked by a tendency to synthesize Confucianism, Buddhism,

and Taosim. This syncretic tendency also made itself felt in Zen by movements toward the unification of Zen and Buddhist philosophy and of Zen and Pure Land thought which resulted in the decline of Zen. Fortunately, however, before this decline set in, Zen had been transplanted in Japan where it stimulated a unique cultural growth which may be aptly termed Zen Culture.



The Very Reverend Keidō Chisan Kōhō Zenji
and Reverend Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett
at Dai Hon Zan Sōjiji.

British Monks' News

Rev. Teacher Daishin. As one of the temple officers Rev. Teacher Daishin is head of the Abbey's steadily expanding Gift Shop. In July of last year he successfully completed the ceremonies of Kessei and graduated as a Teacher of Buddhism. He will now be continuing his training with Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett at the Abbey.

Rev. Jimyo. Rev. Jimyo is a member of the Gift Shop staff and is also the Bath Monk. "I must cleanse my body and my heart" says the bath verse. The Bath Monk is responsible for all activities surrounding this important aspect of monastic life: the ceremonies, scheduling of baths, care of the bathhouse etc., thus helping to make taking baths a religious activity and a part of one's training.

Rev. Myōhō. During the summer Rev. Myōhō made a 5'10" high statue of the Cosmic Buddha for the Abbey's Meditation Hall. She has since left the Publicity Department and, as the temple sculptress, is now working on a statue of Fudō. On returning to England she intends making a set of statues for Throssel Hole Priory. Rev. Myōhō also looks after the Abbey's Prison Correspondence Project.

Rev. Saidō. As a member of the Publicity Department Rev. Saidō helps produce the Abbey's posters, brochures and flyers. This year his work has included researching into the possibilities of selling and distributing Rōshi Kennett's books. Rev. Saidō also assists the temple stonemason in his work and looks after the fountain outside the Meditation Hall. The water represents the Waters of the Spirit which flow during Meditation, and keeping the fountain clean so that the water may flow freely is an important task.

Rev. Chūshin. On October 30th 1979 Rev. Chūshin received the Transmission from Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett. At these private ceremonies "the Life Blood of Buddhism is passed on from master to disciple. Open and

bright it cannot be hidden in the ten quarters."¹ Rev. Chūshin is a member of the Disciplinary Department and holds the position of Dōan, being responsible for actively helping all trainees to be considerate and aware at all times. He also assists the Treasurer in his work.

Rev. Meian. Rev. Meian was also Transmitted by Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett on October 30th. On December 17th 1979 she completed her 100-day term as Chief Junior, the monk who leads all trainees in work, meditation, meals and other activities. All monks do a term as Chief Junior, generally before Transmission. It is one of the most valuable periods in a monk's training - there is so much to do, and so many aspects to the job that one's potential for helping others, and also for creating chaos, becomes more clearly apparent than in many other jobs. Rev. Meian's Hossen ceremony was held on October 27th.

Jigen. Jigen assists in the running of the Gift Shop and also helps the Infirmary in caring for any members of the community who may be ill.

Mokugen. Mokugen continues her work as a member of the kitchen staff and, as well as making cheeses, has gained considerable experience in the canning of fruit and preserves.

Duncan. At the end of October Duncan joined us to complete his postulancy which began at Throssel Hole Priory. He will, as do all postulants, support himself for the first two years of his training. He is now working in the Maintenance and Firewood Departments. We were delighted that he could join us at the Abbey.

We would like to thank the congregation for the help and support which has been so generously given. We wish you all a happy and successful 1980, and hope that the Dharma will shine brightly within your training.

¹ "Zen Is Eternal Life", Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Dharma Publishing, 1976, p. 254.

WHY MEDITATE?
OR WHY SHOULD WE TRAIN?

Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke, O.B.C.

The essence of Buddhism comes in finding the Truth for yourself. There is little or no merit in simply calling oneself a Buddhist unless one is actively determined to do something about oneself. You should meditate deeply upon this point.

Buddhism then is not a passive religion where someone else takes care of your spiritual salvation. It is essential that your active desire to train be cultivated. Unless this willingness to meditate and to keep the Precepts is present a Priest or Teacher is helpless. After all *"The Buddhas and Ancestors do but point the way, thou must go alone"*.

What then must be done to cultivate this willingness? What does Buddhism teach? The purpose of training is to free ourselves from the bonds of birth and death. In the introduction of the Shushogi, Dogen Zenji writes:

*The most important question for all Buddhists is how to understand birth and death completely. Should you be able to find the Buddha within birth and death they both vanish; all you have to do is realise that birth and death, as such, should not be avoided and they will cease to exist for, if you can understand that birth and death are Nirvana itself there is not only no necessity to avoid them but also nothing to search for that is called Nirvana. The understanding of the above breaks the chains that bind one to birth and death, therefore this problem, which is the greatest in all Buddhism, must be completely understood."*¹

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1. Zen is Eternal Life, by Rev. Roshi Jiyu-Kennett,
O.B.C. P. 154

Training then only becomes vitally important to us when we awaken the knowledge of the first of the Four Noble Truths: *"All existence is filled with suffering"*.² In Zazen Rules, Dogen Zenji expresses this by saying:

"Of what use is it to merely enjoy this fleeting world? This body is as transient as dew on the grass; life passes as swiftly as a flash of lightening. Quickly the body passes away; in a moment life is gone".³

It is amazing how most of us cling to this life which is so filled with impermanence and suffering. I think it can only be that most of us do not see how much pain this clinging causes us. To get caught in the positive aspects of this world is to be caught by a disease that my Master calls "The Love and Light Syndrome". To be caught by the negative aspects of this world is to fall into negativism, cynicism and despair. The suffering caused by an attachment to either of these viewpoints is illustrated by the second of the Four Noble Truths: *"Suffering is caused by clinging to things material, spiritual, or sensual"*. Sekito Kisen in Sandokai writes: *"Here born we clutch at things and then compound delusion later on by following ideals"*.

The "Love and Light Syndrome" emphasises the joy and beauty of the world which tends to obscure the first and second of the Four Noble Truths. Cynicism and despair tend to obscure the third and fourth of the Four Noble Truths:

(3) Suffering can be transcended and Nirvana realised here and now, and (4) The way to end suffering is by the daily practise of the Eightfold Path, that is serious religious training and the keeping of the Buddhist Precepts".

The first step in cultivating our willingness

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2. Zen is Eternal Life by Rev. Roshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C. p. 387
 3. *ibid.* p. 290
 4. *ibid.* p. 279

to train is to be willing to take off the coloured glasses through which we have always viewed the world. We must stop trying to make the world appear to be a permanent, lovely, joyful, full place. Alternatively we must stop making the world and our lives appear to be negative and threatening. *"For without fail, evil is vanquished and good prevails"*.

We change our lives and do our training by allowing ourselves to become aware of those things in our lives which cause suffering to ourselves and others. What we need to deal with are those things over which we have control. There are many things in everyone's life that one willfully does (or does not do) that one knows are not good for oneself or helpful to others that causes us to dislike or to be dissatisfied with ourselves. This is the real breakage of the Precepts. Willful disobedience to one's own heart is what creates suffering and causes the most painful and long lasting karma.

It is only then, when we allow ourselves to be aware of the impermanence and suffering of this world, at least on some level, that we really feel the need to do something. The necessity of the practice of Buddhism has no real urgency and little meaning until that point is reached.

PRIORY NEWS

Memorial Ceremonies. Memorial Ceremonies have been held in January for Stanley Lyall, father of a member of our congregation, Mrs. Sandra M. Lawson. Mr. Lyall died on Jan. 11th, 1980. In the Soto Zen tradition, the spiritual care of the mortally ill begins before death by teaching the dying one how to meditate and train and how to understand various Plates relating to pre-death kenshōs, in How to Grow a Lotus Blossom. (Rev. Roshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C.) If this is not possible, a priest will recite certain exhortations to the dying, urging him or her to gather his will and faith and go straight to the Lord of the House. These exhortations (see Shasta Abbey Book of Ceremonies or The Book of Life) occur before clinical death, at the moment of clinical death and on certain days and weeks afterwards until 49 days are passed as part of memorial ceremonies. During this period, there is still time before rebirth takes place for the dead person to make a positive decision, rather than to judge himself as beyond redemption, consequently shutting himself off from the Cosmic Buddha. Memorial Ceremonies are also performed without exhortations after this period. We offer our deepest condolences to Sandra and her family.

Retreat. A retreat was held in Southsea (Portsmouth) on Feb. 8th and 9th at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Peter Lavin, members of our congregation, with 10 people in attendance. Rev. Teigan was the priest in attendance.

Insurance. The Priory is now fully covered by insurance to protect its buildings and contents against fire, and other perils (excepting weather damage on the incomplete new Zendo), public liability, personal accident and money loss.

News from Shasta Abbey. An advanced training program for the more senior lay trainees was initiated Oct. 22-29, 1979. It is called the Lay Ministry Program and includes two groups of trainees: 1) experienced

members of the congregation who desire to take on more responsibility and 2) people in the helping professions (doctors, nurses, teachers, therapists) who practice Zen meditation.

It will enable the Lay Ministers to teach Zen Meditation, assist at Priories, lead meditation groups and assist at Abbey retreats. Those in the Lay Ministry Program will be required to attend a "week intensive" sesshin at the Abbey once every 3 months, for at least one year, after which they will receive a certificate for one year, which may be renewed annually by regular contact with the Shasta Community.

The New Kitchen-Dining Room complex was formally opened on Nov. 8th with Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett leading a special ceremony at the Altar outside the entrance asking for the blessing and protection of the new buildings. The complex desperately needed for years, not only provides sufficient room and sanitary facilities for the kitchen staff, but will provide enough space for the entire community for meals, lectures and social events such as weddings.

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POSTERS

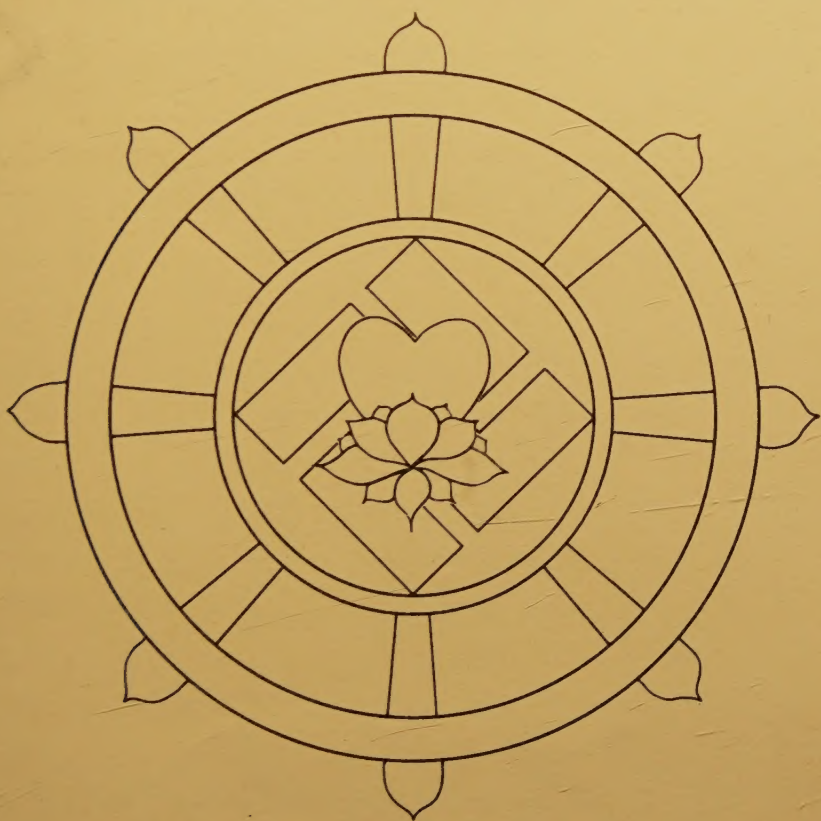
To everyone who responded to our request about putting up posters- thank you. The posters are not yet printed and we will send them to you when they are available. If anyone else would like to help us with our publicity, please send us your name and the number of posters that you can place.

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